

## INTRODUCTION

The excitement is already building in anticipation of our trip to the lands of the Bible. As your director, I am thankful for each of you who have decided to come on this trip and pray that it will be a time that will stimulate you intellectually, refresh you spiritually, and strengthen your faith in the inerrant, infallible Word of God. Much that we see on this trip will give you a fresh perspective on the Bible, as well as current events. You will never read the Bible the same again. When you read of the events in the *Judges*, *Acts*, and the life of Christ you will have accurate images in your head of the geography and spatial relations between landmarks and towns. Your appreciation for the grace of God toward Israel, and the provision of a sufficient salvation through these people will be greatly enhanced. Above all, I hope that this will focus your attention even more on the future return of our Lord who will come back to the Mount of Olives even as he left. (Acts 1:11). I encourage each of you to do as much Bible reading, historical reading, and map study as you can before we depart. The more of this you are able to do the more you will gain. Some suggestions are given later in these instructions.

Antonio Futterer, who explored the Holy Land in the 1920's during the period of the British Mandate, gave some comments in his book *Palestine Speaks*, which should provide some chuckles to you as you plan for traveling to the Holy Land. Futterer was one of the early British adventurers searching for the lost Ark of the Covenant (long before Indiana Jones!). In his book he recounts not only his experiences in Israel, but shares some "travel tips" with his readers. I thought before you get into the preparation for our trip that you might enjoy hearing about what it took to get there some seventy years ago. You will be glad to know that you will no longer need to be subjected to a chemical bath or have your clothes fumigated, you can also skip the use of the deck chair and woolen underwear! However, Futterer is still accurate when he advises us to prepare for inconveniences and to learn to be content under all conditions. That advice is as sound today as it was when the Apostle Paul, also a traveler in the Holy Land, wrote it to the saints at Philippi (Philippians 4:11-12).

Those involved in planning our tour have worked hard to schedule things as carefully as possible. Your tour guides, Dr. Dean, the airlines, the hotels, and the travel agencies all want you to have a marvelous adventure and to return home safe and happy. Remember, however, that some circumstances are beyond everyone's control and there may be minor changes in the itinerary, airplanes that are late and/or overcrowded, and people who are neither grace oriented nor have a relaxed mental attitude! Yet, culture shock, jet-lag, the language barrier, and the many other new situations we will encounter can help us expand our horizons (and develop our spiritual lives) if we decide to receive them as opportunities rather than difficulties. I have found, though, that the unexpected challenges are often the stuff of stories we tell for the remainder of our lives.

In the Grip of the Lamb,

Robert Dean, Jr., Th.M., M.A., D. Min.  
Director, DBM Bible Lands Tour

## **DRESSING FOR THE TRIP**

You will be dressing for a desert climate in the summer: warm to hot days with cooler nights. Do not over burden yourself with unnecessary or excessive items on the tour, but prepare for the difference between Judea and the Galilee and Dead Sea area. In the area of dress, two rules apply: casual and comfortable. No formal clothing will be needed. The countries we tour generally dress informally. Travel as lightly as possible! In most places where we visit, laundry may be washed and pressed overnight, (an extra charge to you on your hotel bill, however use this service at your own risk). The following are suggestions for items to include, however, the final decision is your own.

1. A good comfortable, sturdy pair of broken-in walking shoes: no heels or boots. (Last summer I wore a strong pair of walking sandals the entire trip)
2. Waterproof footwear for wading (flip-flops, boat shoes, or sneakers)
3. Light (not bulky) bathrobe
4. A sweater and/or windbreaker (evenings may be cold and windy)
5. Women: large scarf (for covering up of shoulders and arms), ankle-length wrap-around skirt (for covering legs, if wearing shorts); Men: long pants: required at religious sites. Best: khaki shorts with zip-on trouser legs. Some of the churches and other sites require the ladies to not have bare shoulders or legs; no bare legs for the men either.
6. Swimsuit (for those who wish to swim when & where possible) & cover-up (for sun) or to wear if you wish to be baptized.
7. Large hat, cap or scarf, sun block (get highest protection rating) for sun protection. Sun-block for those sensitive to the sun.
8. Pair of sunglasses (the oriental sun is intense and the reflection on sand and stone is very bright). Bring an extra pair if you are prone to losing them!
9. A pair of slippers or sock-type slippers (for overnight plane flight and long motor-coach travel)
10. Loose-fitting clothes like jogging suits, jeans, khakis, light pants/skirts & t-shirt, etc. (for comfort on plane trips and daily touring). Shorts may be worn some days, but not always!!! Finally, choose what best suits your taste, keeping in mind the following considerations:

The Middle East has a climate similar to that of California, Texas, and Florida. In June the average high in Jerusalem is in the upper 80s to upper 90s (F) and in the upper 60s during the evenings. In the Galilee the temperature will be about the same, but in the Dead Sea area and Eilat the temperatures will run 100-110 in the daytime. The lows at night at the Dead Sea the average Fahrenheit temperature is around 70-80 degrees The humidity is usually very low

(i.e., dry heat), so you will find that dehydration, not perspiration, is the problem. It is very important that you drink lots of water or fruit juices throughout the day. Bottled water is usually available on the bus and canned juices will be available at rest stops. Generally dress for leisurely activity in a temperate zone remembering that modesty is a must in the Middle East (see comments below). The following are recommendations for men and women respectively concerning dress.

### *FOR THE LADIES*

For women, the most important factor in travel wardrobe is a basic color scheme. Shoes and other accessories should be chosen in a color that blends with the entire wardrobe rather than different color sets that add extra weight (always pack less than you think you will need: you will be glad you did!). Above all, clothing should be chosen for comfort, style, and easy packing. Select garments that serve various purposes. Separates provide for greater flexibility. Sweaters and skirts/pants should be selected to mix and match with bright scarves and novelty belts for variation. Wash & wear dresses, blouses, and undergarments are preferable. Shorts may be worn, however, some Arab, Jewish and Christian sites we will visit require that legs and arms be covered for modesty. If you desire to wear shorts, plan to carry with you a sweater or wrap around skirt that can easily be put on at the site location. You will need a wrap, sweater, or warm jacket for the evening cold in Jerusalem, and something lighter for the Galilee and the Dead Sea.

The style during the day may be chosen in regard to travel convenience, while in the evening chosen in regard to being casual. It is highly suggested that you leave valuables (especially expensive jewelry) at home. If you choose to bring it, you alone will be responsible for its possible loss.

### *FOR THE MEN*

For men, it is suggested that you wear jeans, shorts, or some of the cotton-nylon blend travel pants with zip off legs. These breathe easily and dry quickly. You can find these at numerous stores and online sites from REI, North Face, Academy, and stores that specialize in expedition wear. Short-sleeved sport shirts or t-shirts for day wear are a good choice and a long-sleeved casual dress shirt for evening. Shorts also may be worn, but you should carry an extra pair of comfortable trousers that can be slipped on and off as a cover-up or buy the kind of pants that convert to shorts with the ease of a zipper! A cap or hat is highly recommended, and will be necessary as a head covering at certain Jewish sites and in the strong sun at Masada and the Dead Sea. Socks should be comfortable, non-slip, and complimentary to your type of foot wear. Since you will be doing a considerable bit of walking, be sure your day-time socks are athletic-type, preferably cotton, or with a high cotton blend. It is also recommended that you use a money clip, in your front pocket, rather than a billfold because pick-pockets (usually kids) work tourist areas.

No dinner jackets, neckties, or suits should be brought. Better casual attire for evening wear is expected in the hotel dining room but not required. Shoes for men can range from good walking tennis shoes to sandals. The rule is comfort and support. Bring a pair of plastic or rubber boat shoes or flip-flops for wading. Conditions permitting, you will have the

opportunity to get in the water in Hezekiah's Water Tunnel, the Sea of Galilee (fresh water), the Dead Sea (salt water), and the Mediterranean Sea (salt water). The beaches in these areas are not soft, sandy beaches (except Mediterranean Sea), but pebbled with all size rocks! In Israel there are no dangerous fish except in the Red Sea.

### **PACKING FOR THE TRIP**

From the U.S. to foreign destinations on most airlines you are permitted two pieces of checked luggage per person. The maximum weight of any one bag is 50 pounds. The dimensions of the first bag may not exceed 62 linear inches and those of the second bag may not exceed 55 linear inches [to get the linear dimension of each bag add the length, width, and height.] You are also allowed one carry-on bag that must not exceed 45 linear inches and not weigh more than 40 pounds and one personal item such as purses, cameras, camcorders, lap top computers, etc. Tour groups usually are treated less strictly than individuals with respect to luggage allotments and weights, and international flights are usually less picky than domestic flights. Even so, you may be charged extra if baggage is excessively heavy, especially on the domestic return when you are loaded down with souvenirs!

Luggage should be sturdy, light-weight and have good locks (if you use locked luggage this will need to be individually done after security is completed unless you have Home Land Security approved locks). The purpose of locks is to keep a suitcase from opening accidentally, but they are not effective against theft. Therefore, do not put anything in your checked bag on a trip that you cannot afford to lose! Remember, too, you will have to open your luggage for security! Luggage itself should be given this consideration. Do not take your best set, it may get damaged or lost. Also add something distinctive to the outside of your luggage to make it readily identifiable by you.

For the ladies, a conveniently large travel handbag is a must. It should have an easily accessible compartment for passports, currency, and travel documents. A shoulder strap bag is best for touring, while a simple clutch bag will suffice for evenings out. You will want a place for your camera, cosmetics, and the extra scarf and wrap-around skirt, should you include them. You may want to pack extra canvas carry bags for use with souvenirs.

For the men, a backpack (if you like them) or tote-bag will work. A large camera bag can double for this purpose also. Also, be sure you have good luggage name/address tags (filled out!) attached securely on your luggage. Group bags are not always loaded together and the tags make it easier you to retrieve your belongings. Always put your name on the inside as well as the outside of your luggage. Even the best tags can fall (or be pulled) off. If you have locks, bring an extra suitcase key and put it someplace other than in your suitcase!

Airports are notorious for their treatment of baggage, and loss of luggage is not exceptional. For this latter reason, you should have some kind of travel insurance that covers theft for loss of luggage (the airlines will only replace your bag, not contents, unless you have a certified itemized list of all contents). Such baggage insurance coverage is about \$3-5 per day. Any travel agency can supply this kind of trip insurance, which can also include other coverage such as in-flight life insurance, land life coverage, and trip cancellation insurance (or for emergency interruptions of the tour requiring an early return home). Also trip insurance is

helpful if something happens and you cannot go due to illness or because the trip is cancelled. REMEMBER ONCE PAYMENT HAS BEEN MADE TO ISRAEL, THERE IS NO REFUND AVAILABLE

## *HOW TO PACK*

To travel light, and yet carry everything, one must pack correctly. There are two methods that seasoned travelers recommend: (1) Pack in layers, starting with the heavier and odd-shaped items, then fill in the remaining spaces with smaller items. A layer of tissue or plastic (garbage bags work well) between garments eliminates unnecessary creasing (so they say!). (2) Roll articles of clothing into a cylindrical shape and set them in rows next to one another. Clothing rolled in this fashion is not supposed to wrinkle (again, so they say!) As in the first method, fill in all space between items with smaller objects. If you have articles which must lie flat, they can be placed on top. If you pack any breakable items, they should be placed between the layers or rolls. It is best, however, to plan to take all breakables (especially souvenirs) in your carry on luggage. Save room in your bag for an extra carry-on bag for souvenirs. Pack the items you are going to need first in the most accessible places in your bag. Remember that your bags will be inspected and everything removed. Don't be too meticulous in packing or you will be frustrated by these unavoidable security checks.

In packing your carry-on luggage, consider what items you would be lost without and put them into your carry-on. Usually you and your luggage will arrive at the same time, but it is best to be prepared for the worst! Medications, glasses, a clean shirt, a change of socks and underwear, a hair brush, and basic cosmetics should go with you into the cabin. Make sure your tickets, passport and money are with you (preferably on your person) at all times!

## *EXTRA ITEMS NICE TO HAVE ALONG*

The following are extra items that you may find useful, but might not remember to include:

- Travel alarm clock, Kleenex, Prescribed medications
- Small flashlight (to be used in Hezekiah's tunnel)
- Band aids, Favorite shampoo (hotel brands are poor)
- Towelettes/anti-bac wash, Sewing kit, Zip-lock storage bags
- Shower/swim cap, Address book, Q-tips

Water bottle carrier, Multiple vitamins, Extra batteries

Tape & Cam recorders: these should be light and battery operated. Take plenty of batteries as they are more expensive to purchase overseas. Rechargeable batteries work fine, but be sure you bring an adapter and converter. Most tour guides are happy to have their lectures recorded and the tapes will help you organize and review the trip photos and notes when you get home.

Hair dryers, curling irons, and other U.S. appliances: As a reminder, you will need a transformer (converter) and an adapter plug to use your U.S. appliances. However some brands make hair dryers and curling irons with built-in converters. For these, you must flip a switch on the appliance for use in Israel (move switch from 110 to setting closest to 220). If you have these types, you may need only an adapter plug (the two-prong, small, round type). Better Israeli hotels usually have an outlet in the bathroom that will operate U.S. electric razors; however, other appliances will not operate with these outlets.

Toiletries and cosmetics: Most toiletry items can be purchased at the hotel or a shop near to the hotel, however, keep in mind that U.S. brands can be more expensive in Israel. Time to buy these items may be provided in the evenings, however, most drug stores close before our touring day ends, so again, be prepared, we cannot stop for items along the way as we are on a strict schedule, and such delays may force us to miss touring certain sites! It is best to bring an ample supply of your favorite brands and maybe even some luxury brands spoil yourself a little on this trip (it helps reduce the stress of other unavoidable inconveniences).

Hangers for clothing: The hotels will supply these, but they are usually permanently fixed in the closet, so if you want to hand-wash clothing and hang them up for drip dry you will need to include some from home.

Sleep masks and ear plugs: Bring these if you are sensitive to light or noise when sleeping. We do everything we can to minimize these issues in our room assignments, however, sometimes it is impossible to totally eliminate bothersome sounds (such as Moslem calls to prayer on loudspeakers at early hours of the morning). Also, these will be useful for in-flight comfort, as you will encounter sunlight (and probably an in-flight movie!) during your normal nighttime hours as we move across time zones.

A one-size-fits-all stopper for bathroom sink: While our hotels will have such, if we were to use a Kibbutz it may not (not applicable unless you have been informed at the time you sign up for your trip that we will be in *Kubbutzim*). If you plan on washing clothes in your room you may need this. It is my practice to wash clothes at least a couple of times during the tour.

Extra pair of eyeglasses or a copy of your prescription. There are optometrists available; however, you will have to miss part of the tour to secure their services. Better to be prepared! Also include any equipment needed to clean contact lenses or to repair glasses (hinges, nosepieces, etc.).

Any medication you take regularly: As well as standard pain and nausea/diarrhea control items such as aspirin, Kaopectate, Lomotil, and cough drops. There is no cause for concern about food or water in Israel but some people have a bit of discomfort from any change in water. Note about packing liquids: If you plan on taking any items that contain liquid, remember that liquids tend to expand at high altitudes. Put liquids in plastic containers, filled only 3/4 full, and use screw on lids instead of pop on or cork lids. For greater safety, put all liquid containers in plastic bags (just in case of spills). The plastic bags will also be useful for storing damp washcloths, bathing suits, and shoes. Remember that in the US you may not have liquids in your carry on bags exceeding 3 oz.

Bible: A small, compact or thin-line edition (with your name in it). You will want one with both Testaments.

Notebook: Many people like to bring a notebook or travel diary to keep daily notes or jot down facts along the way. Be sure to include pens and/or pencils.

Other useful items: Zip-lock bags (noted above) have 1001 uses, so bring a bunch along. Also bring super glue, which fixes many various breakdowns. We've used it on everything from glasses to teeth! It can also help repair rubber soles that may split from the shoe during

walking. Consider bringing scotch tape, small tools, an extra toothbrush, extra shoelaces, and nail polish for runs in nylons.

### *Voltage Converters*

Because of the difference in electrical current, if you are taking a shaver, travel iron, hair dryer, contact heat-cleaning unit, etc, you may need a converter and adapter in your hotel and/or guesthouse room. Sometimes the hotel can supply you with one—just ask the Concierge at the front desk. However, for convenience you can buy your own in the States (a small one that works well might cost around \$20-30). Ask for an adapter plug set and transformer that can be used with 50 cycle-220 voltage circuits (ours is 60/110). Voltage converters are available at most discount electronics stores. The converter converts the 220 voltage of the Middle East to 110 for American electronics and the adapter fits the plugs in the Middle Eastern walls.

### *MEDICATIONS*

Please remember that it is your responsibility to take all medications as prescribed! If you are taking medication that is necessary for your health, be sure to get a separate written prescription from your doctor and take it along in addition to the bottle of medication you are carrying. Keep all medication in your flight or carry-on bag, as your stowed luggage may be kept for inspection, checked through to your ultimate destination, or delayed in transit.

### *Health Requirements*

No vaccinations, shots, or inoculations are required for travel to Israel. However, if you are behind on your basic inoculations (especially your DPT shot) you might want to update them. A good stress-formula vitamin supplement is suggested.

### *Flight Information*

You will be notified separately of our flight itinerary, at this time, a couple of issues are still being finalized.

Group departing US on the late night flight generally arrive in Israel before dinner the next day at Ben Gurion Airport, and those who leave on the late night flight after dinner from Ben Gurion Airport, arrive in US the next morning before 5:00 am.

### *Baggage and All Flights*

Airline travel and connections will be through JFK International in New York. Please do not check your bags through to Istanbul or Tel Aviv. You will need to check your bag through to JFK. Then retrieve your bag and then go to the Turkish Air counter and recheck your bag to Istanbul (for the Turkey extension) or Tel Aviv (for the Israel part).

Further information regarding your connection to JFK will be sent to you.

### *Time Differential*

The time in Israel is 7 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time, 8 hours ahead of Central Standard Time, and 10 hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time. Remember this when calling home! Flying time non-stop to Tel-Aviv from New York takes a little more than 10 hours, and because of the change in time zones and the speed of the plane there will only be 2-2 1/2 hours of night sky! Some say that the herb Melatonin (available as tablets at most store pharmacies) helps with jet lag if you take it for 3 days before departure and 3 days after arrival. Also, in order to minimize the affects of jet lag, we will not allow you to sleep immediately when we get to Israel. It is always best to follow the country's time schedule to properly adjust! Since we have a late afternoon arrival, we will drive to Jerusalem, visit only two short sites, check-in to the hotel, have dinner, and be then allowed to retire. And remember, the time you lose going over you gain coming home, so you will practically get home the same day you leave Israel!

### *Disembarkation Cards*

Just before arrival in Tel-Aviv, the cabin attendants will give each individual a card to fill out. This is standard procedure. You will present the card to the immigration authorities as you go through passport control in Israel. Having the card filled out in advance speeds the entrance process. Remember to keep a pen handy in your carry-on for just such a purpose. Keep the card in your passport since it will be collected when you leave.

### *Returning Flights to the United States*

Our return flight from Tel-Aviv requires us to be at the airport 2 hours prior to the 11:55 P.M. departure (thus arriving at the airport at 9:55 P.M.). Once at the terminal be prepared to wait in line for an hour and face a thorough Israeli security check!

### *Domestic Returning Flights*

Once you get off in New York you are on your own and responsible for your own luggage. Upon arrival at your arrival in the U.S. you will have to pass through U.S. customs. If you have not purchased more than \$400 (this amount increases periodically) worth of goods you have nothing to declare. You may also have nothing to declare if the items you purchased are for religious or educational purposes. A lot of what you buy on this tour could qualify in this way -but let your conscience be your guide! After you have made this qualification and deduction, you should only list the amount in excess of this over \$400 (see more below). On this amount you will have to pay taxes, even if they are gifts. If you have another flight within the U.S. you are responsible for transferring your luggage to this flight.

### *Security and Airport Taxes*

Airlines and the airport have an additional charge for taxes, security and fuel which are beyond my control and uncertain until such time as the tickets are purchased. This was briefly mentioned in the brochure you received. I have estimated approx \$270 USD per person, which is included in the overall cost, but this is subject to change. I will inform you as soon as I know the cost. If need be you may reimburse me by check or cash in Newark if

you have not sent a check to arrive to me before we leave. I will have already paid this when it is requested of me by the airlines.

## ALL ABOUT MONEY

Only you know your spending habits (and limits!). The tour price provides your basic necessities (breakfast & dinner), but you will need additional money for lunch, snacks, bottled water, soft drinks, and beverages that are not included with meals. This could average between \$10-20 per person per day. In Israel, the local currency is the New Israeli Shekel (NIS) that can be used, although U.S. dollars are acceptable in most shops. When you do use dollars do not expect to always receive U.S. dollars as change in return. Shopkeepers will do this if possible, but coin change will always be in local coin (as foreign banks only deal with paper money). If using traveler's checks, you can also ask for change in U.S. dollars. However, be aware that some merchants do not like traveler's checks because they get less money in conversion from the banks. If you plan to purchase items such as gold jewelry, diamonds, original art, antiquities, ancient coins, tapestries, carpets, olive wood, brass or ceramics, you should use credit cards. The merchant pays a higher price to accept the card and may want to pass this on to you, but you could negotiate this into the final price. In some cases personal checks may be accepted and are often preferred to credit cards. I have found it more convenient to get cash using my credit card in an ATM, and a better exchange rate. However, you must be on your guard for identity thieves there as in the US.

### *Extra Expenses*

The following may constitute extra expenses:

Beverages: not included with meals: \$5-7 per day. This includes bottled water and soft drinks at each meal or rest stop, which cost about \$1-2 a piece (Iced Tea in some better hotels may cost as much as \$2-4); in Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East, drinks at meals are always extra!. Remember that you will need to drink a lot to avoid dehydration, so the money will be well spent! These may be charged to your room in the hotel. You will have to settle the bill at checkout. Please do this early, so that you do not delay the tour group at departure!

Lunch/Snacks: \$10 per day per person. It is usually recommended that you eat a snack at rest stops mid-morning (and afternoon), and a light lunch. This will help you keep up your energy for continued walking. In the evenings at the coffee shops and outdoor cafes you will probably exceed your budget---you just can't help yourself! It is possible to pack something small from the breakfast buffet -but only if you are discreet since the whole group doing this might appear to be pillaging the restaurant!

Taxi fare: Although it is possible to walk to places of interest from most of our hotels and a hotel shuttle may also be available, if we should have a free day in Jerusalem, you may want to use a local taxi to go to distant parts of the city. This is also necessary if you plan to stay out late in the cityóthe easiest way back to the hotel will be a taxi. There are *specials* which are for private hire for a higher price or *regulars* which can be called by asking the bell captain for this courtesy or simply *hailing* one if downtown. It is best to ask the driver to use the meter, though in some cases a negotiated fee for a small group is better, but at any

rate a group will split the metered fare. You do not have to tip the driver, and be sure that he gives you correct change.

### *Travelers Checks & Currency Exchange*

If you want to carry traveler's checks for your protection keep records of your check numbers separate from your checks and leave a list of numbers at home also. American Express, Bank of America, VISA, Citicorp, and Thomas Cook are checks that will be accepted easily. Checks in \$20-\$50 denominations are the best and safest way to carry your money when traveling. You may cash U.S. traveler's checks in most shops that serve tourists. traveler's checks are especially useful in purchasing higher priced items. You can convert them to local currency at banks (located in every international airport) and at your hotel. Remember also that wherever you change currency there is a charge for converting money both into and from the local currency. However, that charge will usually be given in the currency of the country.

In addition to cash and traveler's checks, other methods of payment are possible. While not a general policy, personal checks are often accepted, with proper identification, at many shops (always ask first!). Credit cards may also be used. However, a warning about credit cards is in order. Unfortunately, certain stores in the old City are noted for poor business practices. If you use credit cards, be sure you get and save the receipt. This will protect you in case of a problem. Be sure and check your monthly statement when you receive it to be sure there was no confusion (there rarely is) about the conversion rate and you were charged dollars instead of the local currency (unless the item is quoted and paid in dollars). We will discuss this subject in greater detail in Israel.

### *All about shopping*

When you travel to Israel with us, we encourage you to get to know the people of the land. One good way to do this is by shopping. You will enjoy talking to shop keepers, absorbing the sights and sounds of the busy streets, roaming through the oriental bazaars, spending some leisure time indulging in a pastry and coffee at a sidewalk cafe and seeking out that special gift or antiquity for a friend or relative back home. Shopping for souvenirs is not only an exciting experience in the culture of the lands we will visit, but can also be an opportunity to buy ahead for birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, etc. They are special gifts that carry with them not only the exotic, but also the remembrance of the spiritual events associated with the places of their origin. You will find a variety of items to buy that are unique to each country and less expensive than in the U.S. Biblical period antiquities are now in high demand since there are new government policies (especially in Israel) that are restricting dealers from acquiring new finds and therefore prices are higher for remaining merchandise. Most shops provide a certificate of authenticity. Even so, you take a chance that the item you purchase is not genuine. Olive wood manger scenes are another item purchased frequently for display at Christmas. Whatever size you buy can be shipped home for you (most arrive safely). We may also make available for order items such as a necklace with your name in gold or silver in Hebrew or Arabic that will be delivered to our hotel at an appointed time. These are usually good deals, but if you make an order, you should plan on paying for the items, even if you find them cheaper elsewhere. Be careful of vendors on the streets or at

sites trying to force items (usually beaded necklaces or picture postcards) on you. Eye contact, even to be friendly, means interest in their product. Ignore them and do not ever open a purse or show them money. Above all, enjoy browsing and buying, but remember some of the best souvenirs are the pictures you will carry home in your head!